Higher Education (HE) Outbreak Plan

We want our HE students to know how and when we may make changes to their teaching, learning and assessment as a result of a pandemic or when we know that there's an increased risk of one.

Our priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of our students and staff and throughout the Covid-19 pandemic we've worked hard to ensure our students can continue learning in a safe way. We'll do everything we can to keep delivering high quality teaching, learning and assessment during this and any future pandemics (or when there's an increased risk of one), while taking onboard any local, national or sector-specific guidance to keep students and staff safe.

This may sometimes result in us making the decision to switch to online classes and remote learning - when and how we do this would depend on the risk level, more detail about this is set-out on this page. We'll aim to continue our Student Support Services in all circumstances, this includes support for mental health and wellbeing, with services moving online and over the phone if necessary. Procedures such as that for college complaints will operate in the usual way.

For more information on what we're currently doing to keep our students and staff safe on campus check out our 7-point plan here. Further information on what we do to minimise risks to health during a pandemic see our Health and Safety Policy here.

Below is our plan for how we will manage and adapt HE learning according to the level of risk:

Delivery Model	Description	Trigger
A. Standard delivery model	The standard delivery model for Higher Education is to deliver blended learning which means we'll still be delivering face-to-face learning in our college campuses combined with on-line activities, resources and support. Studying an HE course at Gateshead College has always been very different to studying at a large university, students choose to study with us because they prefer the small class sizes, the community feel of the college and the supportive environment. While some universities have taken the decision to move sessions on-line because they're unable to use large lecture halls, the small class sizes at Gateshead College	-

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	mean that social distancing measures can be put in place to make it more feasible for students to attend lectures and workshops. If a course includes a practical element using equipment or resources, the plan is to still enable learners to take part in these activities. We've undertaken a through risk assessment which will require learners to adhere to a number of safety and social distancing measures. The plan is for Library facilities at the Baltic Campus to follow their standard opening hours. The college has guidelines for social distancing, face coverings and other forms of risk mitigation. These will be applied across all campuses. The above could change in line with risk levels and potential new lockdown measures. Details of our plans for alternative delivery are outlined below.	
B. Increased blended delivery	In line with changes to lockdown guidance or increased risk we would reduce face-to-face teaching, learning and assessment on college campuses and increase the proportion of remote online learning. If your course includes a practical element using equipment or resources, there may be reduced direct access to those facilities. We will take account of government and sector guidance and our own risk assessments in making decisions about safe access. Access to physical library facilities may be reduced, access to on-line resources would continue.	Local restrictions increased Issues through spread of virus on campus Illness or self-isolation for relevant staff and/or students. Change in national guidance regarding delivery of education Changes to guidance relating to specific professions
C. Selective face-to-face delivery	In the event of significant concerns for safety and wellbeing, a larger proportion of teaching, learning and assessment would move on-line. In this model, courses where it is practical and feasible to do so could move completely on-line.	Significant issues arising from the triggers described in B above.

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	Courses where face-to-face delivery is critical (for example for access to particular resources or equipment) or where there is an identified priority (for example, courses relating to the health sector) would be given precedence in planning on-campus delivery. The aim would be to try to retain elements of face-to-face delivery for such courses where it is felt to be beneficial. Decisions about which courses would be affected and how they would be affected would be informed by national, local and sector guidance. This guidance would also be used to determine when it is safe to move back to less restricted models of delivery such as models A and B above. Physical library facilities may close, however access to on-line resources would continue.	College's own assessment of risk indicates that significant action is necessary to ensure staff and student safety and wellbeing. Introduction of more stringent national guidelines on delivery of teaching, learning and assessment.
D. Total on-line delivery	If a complete lockdown takes place or risk of face-to-face delivery is perceived as high, then we would move from face-to-face teaching in college campuses to remote online learning. Our students and teachers successfully engaged with this remote way of learning during the initial lockdown in March 2020 and we would use the same process. Access to on-line resources would be prioritised as there would be no physical access to college library facilities.. Buildings would only be open for essential workers and students who are required to attend (for example, FE students with high needs). Our aim would be to continue delivery remotely and aim for the schedule of teaching, learning and assessment schedules to adhere as closely as we can to our original delivery and assessment plans. We would aim for the medium of delivery to change rather than altering the teaching, learning and assessment schedule. However, the schedule	High risk level identified. Complete national or local lockdown.

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	would be reviewed on a course-by-course basis and we would have to work with awarding organisations to determine the impact upon assessment methodologies. We cannot rule out the need for adjusting the delivery or assessment schedule although we will aim not to do this. If any assessments could not be completed in a timely way (for example due to inability to access physical resources) we would aim to work within the awarding organisation's guidance for alternative assessment methods. If no alternative arrangements were agreed by the awarding organisation, then assessment would be delayed until it is safe for it to be completed. In this event, assessment may have to be scheduled in a future academic year.	